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A new species of *Oligota* from Morocco, with redescriptions of *O. tugurtana* FAUVEL and *O. pilicornis* FAUVEL (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae, Aleocharinae)

V. ASSING

Abstract: *Oligota barbarica* sp.n. is described from the Haut Atlas, Morocco, illustrated, and distinguished from the similar *O. pusillima* (GRAVENHORST). *Oligota tugurtana* FAUVEL (Northwest Africa, southern Spain) and *O. pilicornis* FAUVEL (France) are redescribed.

1. Introduction

The genus *Oligota* MANNERHEIM 1830 is represented in the Western Palaearctic region by some 25 species, not counting those currently attributed to *Holobus* SOLIER 1849, a former subgenus of *Oligota*. Four *Oligota* species were only recently described from Greece and Turkey (ASSING 2002, in press, KAPP in press). Based on external characters alone, a distinction of these minute beetles is often difficult, but the aedeagus is large in relation to body size and usually highly distinctive. Some species additionally have characteristic sexually dimorphic shapes of the abdominal sternite VIII. Only part of the species have a sclerotized spermatheca, which is usually more or less shaped like a comma.

During a recent field trip to the Haut Atlas, Morocco, yet another *Oligota* species was discovered, which, after comparison with some types and additional material, proved to be new to science and which is described below. I use this opportunity to redescribe two poorly known species occurring in West Europe and Northwest Africa, whose types were studied in the course of the study.

2. Material

The material referred to in this study is deposited in the following public institutions and private collections:

DEIDeutsches Entomologisches Institut, Eberswalde
IRSNBInstitut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Bruxelles (D. Drugmand)
MHNG.....Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Genève
NHMWNaturhistorisches Museum Wien

OÖLML.....Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum Linz
 cAss.....author's private collection
 cWun.....private collection P. Wunderle, Mönchengladbach

3. Descriptions

Oligota pilicornis FAUVEL (Figs. 1-3)

Oligota pilicornis FAUVEL 1900: 236f.

Oligota pilicornis: WILLIAMS 1974: 107f.

Type examined: Syntypes 1♂: ... [illegible] près Le Teil (Ardèche) ... [illegible] Janvier / R.I.Sc.N.B. 17479, *Oligota*, Coll. et det. A. Fauvel / Ex-Typis (IRSNB); 1♂ [dissected prior to present study]: Bordeaux / R.I.Sc.N.B. 17479, *Oligota pilicornis* Fvl., Coll. et det. A. Fauvel / Ex-Typis (IRSNB).

Redescription: Relatively large species; 1.4-1.6 mm long and approximately 0.5 mm wide (at elytra). Coloration blackish brown, with the elytra and the abdominal apex castaneous; legs and antennae light brown, antennae apically not or only weakly infusate.

Head with large eyes; antennae relatively weakly incrassate apically, with indistinct club of 4 antennomeres. Pronotum almost 1.5 times as wide as head; maximal width near posterior angles, anterior strongly narrowed, anterior margin much narrower than posterior margin, the latter distinctly convex (Fig. 1). Pronotal surface with distinct microsculpture and with extremely fine, barely noticeable puncturation.

Elytra large, approximately 1.3 times as wide as and at suture slightly longer than pronotum (Fig. 1); puncturation fine, but more distinct than that of head and pronotum; microsculpture present. Hind wings fully developed. Abdomen wide, widest at segments VI/VII.

♂: sternite VIII strongly transverse and with almost truncate posterior margin (Fig. 3); median lobe of aedeagus with pronounced crista apicalis, with weakly curved ventral process, with two distinct carinae at base of ventral process, and with pair of moderately sclerotized apical internal structures (Fig. 2).

Comparative notes: *Oligota pilicornis* is readily distinguished from all its Western Palaearctic congeners by its large body, its body shape, the morphology of the antennae, the shape of the male sternite VIII, and by the morphology of the median lobe of the aedeagus.

Distribution and bionomics: The species has become known only from various localities in France: Bordeaux, Ardèche, Puy-de-Dôme, Tarn, Gard, Alpes Maritimes, Aude (WILLIAMS 1974).

Oligota tugurtana FAUVEL (Fig. 4)

Oligota tugurtana FAUVEL 1898: 101.

Oligota tugurtana [sic]: WILLIAMS 1974: 108f.

Type examined: Syntypes 1♂: [dissected prior to present study, segments VIII-X missing]: Tugurt / tugurtana Fvl. / R.I.Sc.N.B. 17479, *Oligota*, Coll. et det. A. Fauvel / Ex-Typis (IRSNB). 1♀: Tugurt / R.I.Sc.N.B. 17479, *Oligota tugurtana* Fvl., Coll. et det. A. Fauvel / Ex-Typis (IRSNB).

Redescription: Small species; 1.3-1.5 mm long and approximately 0.4 mm wide (at elytra). Coloration brown, with the elytra, the abdominal apex, the legs, and the antennae yellowish brown to testaceous; antennae apically weakly infusate.

Antennae with distinct club of 3 antennomeres; antennomere VII distinctly transverse, but much smaller than VIII. Pronotum approximately 1.35 times as wide as head; maximal width near posterior angles, anterior strongly narrowed, anterior margin much narrower than posterior margin, the latter distinctly convex. Pronotal surface with weak microsculpture and with extremely fine, barely noticeable puncturation.

Elytra wider and at suture slightly longer than pronotum; puncturation fine, but more distinct than that of head and pronotum; microsculpture present, but shallow. Hind wings apparently of variable length (WILLIAMS 1974).

♂: median lobe of aedeagus relatively small, ventral process apically distinctly curved; internal structures weakly sclerotized (Fig. 4).

♀: posterior margin of sternite VIII weakly convex; spermatheca not sclerotized.

Comparative notes: *Oligota tugurtana* is distinguished from all its congeners especially by its body shape, the light coloration, and by the morphology of the median lobe of the aedeagus.

Distribution and bionomics: The species was described from Algeria (Touggourt) and later also recorded from Morocco (Ounara) and southern Spain (Alicante) (WILLIAMS 1974).

***Oligota barbarica* sp.n. (Figs. 5-10)**

Holotype ♂: MOROCCO - Haut Atlas, SE Asni, Oukaimeden, meadow, 2500m, No. 11, 31°12'56N, 07°50'22W, 28.XII.2002, V. Assing / Holotypus ♂ *Oligota barbarica* sp.n. det. V. Assing 2003 (cAss). **Paratypes**: 11♂♂, 13♀♀: same data as holotype (cAss, DEI, MHNG, NHMW, OÖLML); 5♂♂, 7♀♀: same data, but P. Wunderle (cWun); 1♂, 3♀♀: same data as holotype, but No. 12 (cAss); 1♂, 1♀: same data but leg. Wunderle (cWun); 2♂♂: MOROCCO - Haut Atlas, SE Asni, Oukaimeden, meadow, 2600m, No. 7m, 31°11'56, 07°51'30W, 27.XII.2002, P. Wunderle (cWun).

Description: Small and slender species; 1.3-1.5 mm long and approximately 0.35-0.40 mm wide (at elytra). Coloration blackish brown to blackish; legs dark brown; basal antennomeres light brown, apex distinctly infusate.

Antennae with distinct club of 3 antennomeres; antennomere VII distinctly transverse, but much smaller than VIII. Eyes moderately large, approximately as long as postocular region in dorsal view or only slightly longer, and weakly projecting from lateral outline of head (Fig. 5). Dorsal surface of head with shallow microsculpture and extremely fine, barely noticeable puncturation. Pronotum strongly transverse, approximately 1.6 times as wide as long, but only 1.30-1.35 times as wide as head; moderately (less strongly than in *O. tugurtana*) narrowed cephalad; microsculpture and puncturation similar to those of head. Elytra not very large, 1.10-1.15 times as wide and at suture only indistinctly longer than pronotum (Fig. 5); puncturation dense and fine, much more distinct than that of head and pronotum; microsculpture present, but shallow. Hind wings present, but apparently of somewhat reduced length.

♂: sternite VIII posteriorly weakly convex (Fig. 9); median lobe of aedeagus of characteristic shape and with distinctive internal structures (Figs. 6-8).

♀: posterior margin of sternite VIII more strongly convex than in ♂ (Fig. 10); spermatheca not sclerotized.

E t y m o l o g y : The name (adj.) is derived from Barbar, the old Arab word for the people living in Northwest Africa.

C o m p a r a t i v e n o t e s : *Oligota barbarica* is highly similar to *O. pusillima* (GRAVENHORST) and very difficult to distinguish from short-winged specimens of that species based on external characters alone. In *O. pusillima*, however, the aedeagus is much smaller and of completely different shape, the ♂ sternite VIII is much less convex posteriorly, and the spermatheca is sclerotized; for illustrations of the sexual characters of *O. pusillima* and related species see ASSING (1996).

D i s t r i b u t i o n a n d b i o n o m i c s : *Oligota barbarica* is known only from the type locality in the Haut Atlas, Morocco, where it was found especially under stones, but also sifted from grass roots, on an intensely grazed meadow at an altitude of approximately 2500 m.

Acknowledgement

I am most grateful to Dr. Didier Drugmand (IRSNB) for arranging the loan of the types of *Oligota tugurtana* and *O. pilicornis*.

Zusammenfassung

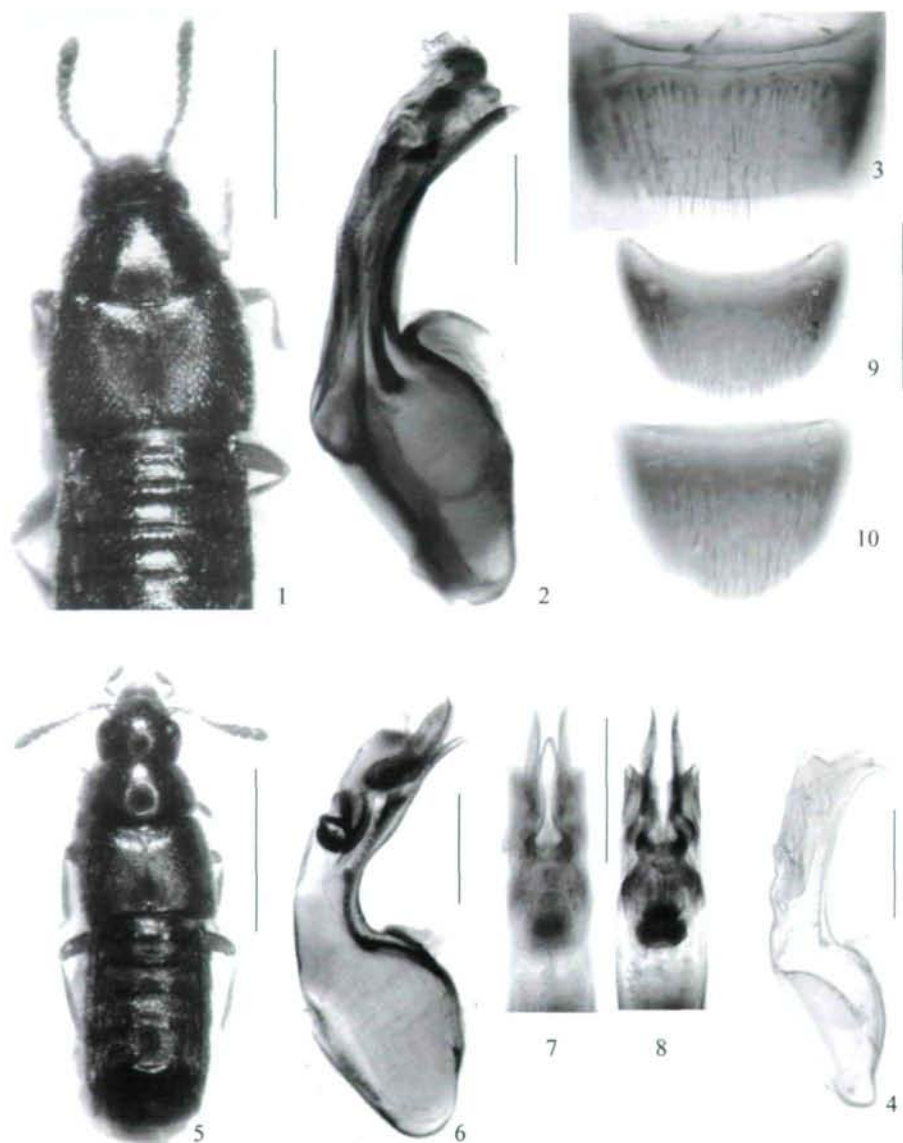
Oligota barbarica sp.n. wird aus dem Hohen Atlas, Marokko, beschrieben und von der ähnlichen *O. pusillima* (GRAVENHORST) unterschieden; wesentliche Differentialmerkmale werden abgebildet. *Oligota tugurtana* FAUVEL (Nordwest-Afrika, Südspanien) und *O. pilicornis* FAUVEL (Frankreich) werden redeskribiert.

References

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Figs. 1-10: *Oligota pilicornis* FAUVEL, syntype (1-3), *O. tugurtana* FAUVEL, syntype (4), and *O. barbarica* sp.n. 5-10): 1, 5 – facies; 2, 4, 6 – median lobe of aedeagus in lateral view; 3, 9 – ♂ sternite VIII; 7 – apical part of median lobe of aedeagus in ventral view, focus at ventral process; 8 – apical part of median lobe of aedeagus in ventral view, focus at internal structures; 10 – ♀ sternite VIII. Scales: 1, 5: 0.5 mm; 3, 9, 10: 0.2 mm; 2, 4, 6-8: 0.1 mm.